United Nations A/51/PV.9

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-first Session

9th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 25 September 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Razali Ismail . . . . . (Malaysia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Address by Mr. Alija Izetbegović, President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

The President: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Alija Izetbegović, President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, His Excellency Mr. Alija Izetbegović, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President Izetbegović: I should first like to greet you, Sir, and to wish you a successful term as President of the General Assembly. I am also happy to inform the Assembly that I come here today from Bosnia, where there is no killing any more. I make both of these statements with great satisfaction.

Allow me now to deliver a less optimistic page of my address. While flying to New York the day before yesterday I read an article published in a prominent American newspaper that dealt with the provision of the Bosnian army with arms during the war. The author of the article does not say so explicitly, but he implies that everything that is Muslim smells of terrorism. For him, it seems it is enough to have a Muslim name and to wear a beard to be suspicious. The writer also mentions a number of people. Their only fault is that they helped the Bosnian army to obtain some arms during the war. Today, there are more than a billion Muslims world wide. I do not know in whose interest it is, in this or similar articles, to push them into the embrace of the extremists.

Our country and people went through hell. The world deemed that it had the right to impose an arms embargo; we believed that we had the right to self-defence. In a competition between those two rights, we believed, and we still believe, that our right was greater. Therefore, I am not going to apologize to anyone for our having done everything possible to secure arms in order to survive. On the contrary, I pay tribute to all brave people, and express my gratitude to all of the friendly countries that assisted us during the war. That page of our history is over, and we are turning to a new one: Peace. I thank the United States of America for starting the initiative for peace and for making efforts, together with other countries, to strengthen this fragile and complex peace.

We are a small country, and we must pursue an open and honest policy. Secret diplomacy and double games are privileges of the mighty. For this and many other reasons, among which is also the aforementioned article, I should like to reiterate some facts and our objectives.

96-86270 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is possible only as a democratic State of three equal nations and of free citizens. We accept this fundamental provision of the Dayton Peace Agreement, with all of its consequences. That is, the well-known formula: one State, two entities, three nations.

It is often considered that the Dayton Agreement is not good enough. It is good because it has stopped the killing in Bosnia and Herzegovina and because a better plan does not exist. Its main deficiency is not in it, but in its implementation. All of the bad aspects of the Agreement could be improved if it were completely and consistently implemented. Unfortunately, this is not the case. According to the provisions of the Agreement, "Herceg-Bosna", established as a parallel State during the war, should cease to exist. But it still exists and impedes the building up of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Dayton peace accord provides that the second entity, the Republika Srpska, should facilitate the return to their homes of more than half a million Bosniaks and Croats who have been expelled. This is not happening; rather, expulsions are continuing.

Generally speaking, the problem of the Dayton Peace Agreement lies in its selective, that is, partial implementation. The Serbs, for instance, like paragraph 2 of Annex 4, which mentions the Republika Srpska, yet they do not like Annex 7, which demands the return of people who have been expelled. They accept the first provision and reject the second one. The world, and above all, the Contact Group members, should tell them explicitly that the Dayton accord is a whole. If there is no return of the expelled people, there is no Republika Srpska. Otherwise, the Dayton Agreement will grow from a small and bearable injustice into a huge and intolerable injustice — and an intolerable injustice leads to new conflict.

The provisions of the Dayton Agreement stipulate that there should be respect for human rights but, nevertheless, human rights are being violated more or less throughout the entire territory.

The September elections and the pre-election campaign offered an opportunity to test this in a very effective manner. Conditions are particularly bad in this regard in the territory of Republika Srpska. For the people from the Federation, neither before nor during the elections was there freedom of movement, or it was very limited; and only Serbian political parties could act. Moreover, the electoral boards that registered the voters and counted the ballots consisted in all cases of only one nation and, very often, one party.

With regard to free media, significant progress has been achieved only in the territory of the legal Bosnian Government, where a large number of independent newspapers and magazines, 40 radio stations, and 12 television stations operate. During the last 50 days of the pre-election period, the ruling party had only one-tenth of the allotted time available at prime time on the State television station, Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina, from 8 p.m. to 12 p.m., while opposition parties had nine-tenths of the allotted time at their disposal. The Government also granted preliminary approval to the Open Broadcasting Network and stands ready to extend this approval on the condition that the Open Broadcasting Network covers the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina and is open to all the political tendencies, left and right.

The issue of Brcko will be solved by the main Arbitrator, Mr. Roberts Owen, an American, since the Serbian side does not attend the meetings of the Arbitration Commission. Both parties have presented their arguments. I wish to emphasize that, in making his decision, the Arbitrator will not be totally free. He is bound by respect for the principles of legality and equity, as explicitly stated in Annex 2, Article V of the Dayton Agreement.

I will complete this brief analysis of the implementation of the Dayton Agreement by stating that the main war criminals, Karadzić and Mladić, are still free, in spite of Dayton, in spite of the orders of the Hague Tribunal and in spite of the elementary demands of justice.

We would like to proclaim the principle of reconciliation of peoples and nations. Bosnia needs this. Here, no one advocates the idea of the collective guilt of a nation. Guilt is always individual, regardless of the number of perpetrators. But for the people to be absolved and for the road towards reconciliation to be open, the criminals must be punished. That is why the international tribunal in the Hague was established, but, as is well known, neither the chief Prosecutor nor the President of the Tribunal are satisfied with what the international community is doing. In vain, they repeatedly indict the perpetrators and forward the warrants. Even on the issue of war crimes, the world is seeking some painless middle-ground solution. When the issue of war crimes like those committed in Bosnia and Herzegovina comes

into question, every compromise is a shameful betrayal of justice. Unpunished war criminals will continue to poison the world and ruin its institutions.

Some people in Europe, and in the United States also, ask whether, after everything that has happened, Bosnia and Herzegovina is possible. These people either do not know the facts or are morally corrupt. They do not know that on the territory of the Serb entity, over half a million people, 40 per cent of the indigenous pre-war population of Bosnia and Herzegovina, were either killed or expelled, and they are totally indifferent to this fact. My answer is that if genocide without punishment is possible, then Bosnia and Herzegovina is not possible.

So the real question is not whether the people can live together, it is more concrete and more straightforward: does a larger nation have the right to expel a smaller nation and then, under the slogan "we cannot live together", usurp its property and demand that these violations be forgotten and legalized? This is how the question "is Bosnia and Herzegovina possible?" should be formulated. And for people of principle and morality, the answer is clear.

Finally, what should the future Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina do at this crucial and historic moment for Bosnia and Herzegovina? In my opinion, it should be constituted as a maximally representative Government composed of all the relevant political actors in conformity with the results of the elections, including an opposition from both entities. It should thereafter proclaim that its programme consists of at least three points. First, it should request from all the signatories of the Dayton Peace Agreement that the Agreement be fully and consistently implemented. At this moment, all the domestic as well as international actors, at least verbally, express their support for this Agreement. The Government should hold them to their words. International pressure in this regard will be necessary for a long time.

Secondly, the Government should proclaim the reconciliation of the peoples and nations on the condition that war criminals are prosecuted vigorously. And thirdly, the Government should ensure freedom of the media as a way to heal the country. The media started the war several years ago with the unprecedented spread of hatred. The media can have the same influence in strengthening peace through spreading tolerance and understanding among the people. State radio and television were an appropriate example during the election campaign. The Open Broadcasting Network could also contribute to this if it is open to all ideas and all political directions and if it is regulated by Parliament.

This programme cannot be carried out by the Government alone. Bosnia and Herzegovina is still a recovering patient and it needs the world's support. The presence of international military forces will be indispensable for a certain limited period of time, and economic assistance will be necessary for longer.

Before I conclude, I would like to say a few words about the United Nations. We support reform of the United Nations system. The changes are necessary not only in the Organization but in its psychology as well, if I may say so. Reform of the Security Council is also necessary, in conformity with the changes in the world, and also to ensure a new attitude towards obligations. The United Nations must not undertake obligations it cannot carry out. This is impermissible. My people have paid an infinitely high price for this irresponsibility.

The "safe area" of Srebrenica and its more than 8,000 innocent victims are not the only, but are the gravest, example of this incomprehensible attitude. We do not know who is responsible, but we seek reforms which will ensure that this will never happen again.

Yesterday, in this very building, I signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We are a small country, and my signature on that Treaty is not of great significance. Nevertheless, we want to participate, even if only symbolically, in everything that is constructive. One day Bosnia and Herzegovina, through its representative, will sign a treaty on the suppression of terrorism, and some other day a treaty on the struggle against drugs and organized crime. I hope that in future Bosnia and Herzegovina will join in any activity whose aim is to confront evil, and that it will continually push the limits in the direction of good and towards a better and safer world.

The President: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alija Izetbegović, President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The President: The first speaker in the general debate this morning will be His Excellency The Honourable Asterio R. Takesy, Secretary for External Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia.

Mr. Takesy (Federated States of Micronesia): Once again, it is my honour as Secretary for External Affairs of the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia to address the General Assembly.

First, I wish to thank the former President, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral, for his enlightened and skilful leadership during the historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

As always, we acclaim the tireless dedication of Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali who, throughout the time of our membership, has worked unceasingly to make the United Nations a more effective instrument for the betterment of our lives.

The people of my country are particularly pleased that you, Mr. President, have been elected to lead this body during its crucial fifty-first Session. Last year we celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations and took stock of its accomplishments during the first half-century. Now we begin in earnest to apply the commitments we made towards the future of this Organization and the world. There may be no other single individual who has been as instrumental or as effective in leading the world community in recent years in the difficult search for common ground, particularly on issues relating to environmentally sustainable development. We are heartened by your past achievements and are thankful for your willingness to undertake an even greater commitment as our President during this session.

This is a year of strong reflection for the people of the Federated States of Micronesia. Ten years have passed since we emerged from the United Nations trusteeship system, and five years since we took our place as a member of the United Nations. During these years we have worked hard to build our capacity to contribute, even as a remote small island State, to the advancement of our common goals. Despite severely limited resources, both in terms of personnel and finances, we have accorded high priority to our participation in United Nations activities and to meeting our financial commitments to this Organization. It remains our strong belief that this priority has not been misplaced.

At the time we joined the United Nations the world's attention was focusing on the global aspects of protection of the environment and on the necessary interrelationship between the environment and development. These were the subjects of the historic work at the Earth Summit in Rio in June 1992. Thanks in large part to you, Mr. President, that landmark United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) gave us Agenda 21 and its associated mechanisms. Since then, much has been accomplished through the work of many institutions and individuals, such as the Commission for Sustainable Development and the Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, Mr. Nitin Desai. We look forward to the special session of this body next year which will be held to review progress during the first five years following UNCED and to appraise the effectiveness of the institutions that have grown up around it.

In the case of the Federated States of Micronesia, this movement was very well timed. Just as our internal process of development began in earnest, we received guidance from Agenda 21 as to sustainability and the integration of environmental protection and development. A short time later, at the Barbados Conference, which had been mandated by UNCED, we participated in analysing the barriers to development faced by all small island developing States.

While we took encouragement from the international and regional aspects of Agenda 21 and the Barbados Programme of Action, we were also motivated to integrate the Rio and Barbados outcomes into our own national policies regarding development. Today our National Council on Sustainable Development, chaired by our Vice-President, plays a central role in the formation of my country's development policies. Since last year my country has been assisted by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Asian Development Bank in undertaking broad economic policy and governmental structural reforms with a view to strengthening the private sector and optimizing efficiency in the public sector. We are taking serious steps to downsize the public service workforce. At the same time, measures are being taken to raise Government revenues through tax-rate increases and support for the public sector. All of our public utility services, including telecommunications, are being commercialized, while a

good number of our public-works services are being privatized.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Vice-President, took the Chair.

For a small island developing country such as the Federated States of Micronesia, the condition and productivity of our limited land areas, and of the seas that surround us, are key to our survival. Only in recent times have we, and others like us, come to realize the vulnerability and fragile nature of a world long taken for granted. It is in the nature of islands to regard our remoteness as our primary protection against all dangers. But the twentieth century has taught us how the land on which we live, and the resources of the sea on which we depend, can be destroyed as a consequence of events that take place far from our own shores. Thus, we are compelled to raise our voice against long-standing actions and practices throughout the world as well as within our own region.

As long ago as 1972, Principle 21 of the Stockholm Declaration established that national sovereignty can no longer be asserted to justify actions that

> "cause damage to the environment of other States or of areas beyond (...) national jurisdiction." (*A/CONF.48/14/Rev.1, p. 5*)

The affirmative responsibility of States to ensure the avoidance of such damage is specifically reiterated in Principle 2 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. That responsibility is now recognized as a doctrine of generally accepted international law.

Yet today we look back on a year during which, at best, only mixed progress was made by the nations of the world in discontinuing or regulating activities harmful to the environment of others. Particularly in the region of the Pacific Islands, our broad expanses and our helpless populations continue to attract the interest of those who have dirty, dangerous business to conduct. With regard to climate change, our rising sea level and strengthening storm activity sound an ominous warning of a global situation that will engulf us if decisive action is not taken by the world community now. Yet, over the past year, the political will among nations to adopt concrete measures has appeared, if anything, to be diminishing in the face of self-interested and determined manipulation of the very processes that we seek to apply.

It is not my purpose, however, to point with gloom to a glass half-empty, for we do take encouragement from the ongoing hard work of thousands worldwide to address a wide range of global security and environmental threats.

We are greatly relieved at the abatement, for now, of the threat of nuclear war and by the cessation, finally, of nuclear-weapon testing. We hail the overwhelming majority of United Nations Members that supported the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The Federated States of Micronesia took particular pride in standing with other sponsors of the recent resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its fiftieth session, because Pacific Islanders were among the first, and may yet prove to be the last actual, not potential, victims of one of history's darkest periods. We congratulate the five nuclear Powers on their major role in achieving this milestone, and we call on all Members to join us in signing the Treaty, as I did here yesterday on behalf of my country. The CTBT is a major step towards the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. We hold that to be the ultimate objective and obligation of the international community and the global environment.

Another difficult problem associated with the technology of mass destruction and with the nuclear age is the disposition of dangerous waste, by-products and castoffs, which themselves pose very real risks of mass calamity to those unfortunate enough to be caught in the path of accidents. We credit the honest intentions of those who insist upon carrying out movements of plutonium and other hazardous materials throughout our region to do so as carefully as they can. We accept and rely upon the word of those who have brought their hazardous materials to our region for destruction that they will conduct this activity only a little longer. We welcome the recent announcement by the United States administration of its opposition to plans to establish a nuclear-waste storage facility on Palmyra Atoll in our region. But experience has shown that good intentions are not always sufficient protection. We must also rely on global mechanisms such as the Basel and London Conventions, and on regional actions to establish zones of protection, such as under the Noumea Convention and the recently concluded Waigani Treaty.

I emphasize that the progress made in all these areas is not lost on us. However, if our children and their children are to inherit a livable world, we must all somehow find a way now to take seriously the message of the Stockholm Declaration. We must face the hard fact

that each time the preventive and precautionary principles are placed on hold to allow some offending activity to continue "just a little longer," the global resolve expressed at Rio and reflected in many actions since is seriously undermined. Glacial progress is better than no progress, but it is not enough where the stakes are literally apocalyptic.

As much as we support the process of the Framework Convention on Climate Change, it appears that intensive negotiations are leading in the direction of elaborate compromises that might represent masterful diplomatic achievement, but fall far short of effectively addressing the Convention's objective. Recently, at the second Conference of the Parties in Geneva, we witnessed a sorry spectacle in which a few delegations blocked the negotiators even from taking note of a critical and unanimous scientific finding, namely that

> "there is a discernible human influence on the global climate".

It fell to the ministers in attendance to make their own declaration recognizing the obvious importance of this and other findings in the second Assessment Report of the Interdepartmental Panel on Climate Change.

When there exists this degree of helplessness on the part of a great majority to come to grips with a problem, even after the denial factor has been laid to rest, one begins to fear that we lack the capacity to save ourselves from ourselves. There is too little time remaining before the next Conference of the Parties in Kyoto, where it is anticipated that a protocol or other legal instrument will be adopted that sets specific targets and timetables for emissions reductions beyond the year 2000. That action will determine whether the Convention can indeed serve to address the threat of global climate change. Yet, at this point, the only specific suggested text, tabled by the Alliance of Small Island States, is regarded by some larger industrialized countries to be overreaching, even as a first step. The outlook is not encouraging.

Thanks to the work of the IPCC in producing its landmark second Assessment Report, we now know that due to the inertia of the Earth's climate system in adjusting to changed inputs, it is already too late to prevent significant loss of land areas and habitability due to sea-level rise during the upcoming century. We must therefore begin in earnest to contemplate measures to adapt to, and defend against, these consequences. In order to implement such measures, island countries will require the financial and technological support of the industrialized world. Without it, tens of millions of people on islands and in low-lying coastal areas throughout the world are certain to become homeless. No longer can the world afford to leave the development of adaptation measures on the back burner. We must begin to act now.

As a nation covering over 1 million square miles of ocean, we place great importance on the sustainable use and management of marine resources within and adjacent to our territorial limits. We are pleased with the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which has provided us with a framework to deal with many important issues in this field. The resulting management mechanisms are of particular importance to those of us surrounded entirely by oceans.

Other encouraging events have included the opening for signature of the Agreement on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks in December 1995, and the election last month of 21 judges for the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. Furthermore, we note with great satisfaction the election in Kingston, Jamaica, of an esteemed Pacific Islander, Mr. Satya Nandan of Fiji, as the first Secretary-General of the International Seabed Authority. With his election and the subsequent actions of the Assembly of the Authority last month, the Authority is finally in place as called for in Part XI of the Convention. With a substantial percentage of the global mineral resources lying beneath the surface of the oceans, the International Seabed Authority has a crucial role in ensuring that the ocean environment is protected throughout the process of exploitation. In this connection, it is important for the General Assembly to provide adequate financial resources to the International Seabed Authority during this session, as it has done with other bodies, until States Parties can assume the responsibility next year.

One of the great learning experiences we have had during our early years of United Nations membership has been appreciating the need for us all, collectively, to act, by example and with determination, to alleviate the suffering of people, wherever they are, who are denied their basic rights as human beings. The Constitution of the Federated States of Micronesia reflects in its Declaration of Rights the standards ingrained in our culture over many centuries, and it has perhaps given us a certain sense of complacency in this area. But we have come to appreciate that the worldwide collective effort to confront human rights issues both strengthens our own

society and affords us an opportunity to participate in helping others.

Despite the inevitable impact of increased contacts with modern Western society, the most important aspects and values of our traditional cultures remain strong, because they are appropriate to our circumstances. We continue to adhere to the concept of the extended family, for example, and many of the principles that are inherent in that system have long ensured a respect in our society for basic human rights.

Changing times, however, inevitably challenge old traditions, and the maintenance of our traditional human rights standards becomes a process of adaptation to our increasingly mobile and homogeneous society, in which legal and governmental institutions must now also play a central role. Here we stand to benefit by involvement and participation in the international human rights movement, as was pointed out by our Vice-President in his address to the World Conference in Vienna several years ago.

As we have studied the mechanisms and obligations of the various United Nations Treaties on human rights, we have entered into constructive internal debates. Children, for example, are among our most important treasures, and so we first acceded to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The preparation of our first report to that Convention was a thought-provoking exercise. Traditionally, women in island cultures have been treated with love and respect, but have not participated fully in public affairs. This is beginning to change. We recently sent a strong delegation to the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, and are actively considering accession to the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women. Overall, we realize that our own application of human rights standards must evolve progressively along with our society.

The Federated States of Micronesia also accepts the responsibility of continuing to speak out, along with similarly committed States, on the need to challenge those Governments that still refuse to accord their own citizens the fundamental rights of human beings. It is a long and often discouraging process, but only with a strong, constant, collective voice can the international community maintain the progress being made in exposing and deterring abuses by the powerful against the unempowered.

Much attention has been drawn in the past several years to the serious financial condition of the United Nations and the need to reform and restructure it. Some Members are so disheartened by the slow pace of this effort that they have lost their resolve to maintain their own financial commitments to the United Nations, making the problems worse and threatening the continued ability of this Organization to carry out its work.

It is the view of the Federated States of Micronesia that while there may be inequities in the structure of assessments, Member States should address them while continuing to meet existing commitments that were established pursuant to agreed procedures. There will always be some level of disagreement over structures and the requirements of funding. But it would be a tragedy of historic proportions if the pursuit of the goals of the Charter were substantially hindered by Member States that feel that they can rightfully tailor their contributions to their own satisfaction according to how their particular demands are met. The fact is that, when we give due regard to the importance of our overall work here, this Organization, even without reform, is well worth its cost — especially when one considers the sums spent by nations on activities that do not contribute to international peace and development.

There is no doubt that, as we begin the next half century of work, the capacity of this Organization is challenged by issues that seem to grow rapidly in number and complexity. But this is not a sign of failure, nor of a lack of capacity. Neither does it suggest that we need another instrument. It is, rather, an indication of the increasing interconnectedness of the global community and of the growing inclination among nations to find and recognize their common interests and to work together to advance those interests.

In order to maintain and improve the responsiveness of the United Nations in a world in which it faces increasing demands, it is necessary that, on a continuing basis, we apply effective upgrades to the way we do our work here. Only in this way can we keep the Organization on a positive course, and faithfully translate the mandates of the Charter into terms of continuing relevance. This is the real meaning of reform. It is not a consequence of past inadequacy, but a positive evolutionary development.

That is easily said, but as we all know, it is very difficult to put into practice. Even so we must not allow that high degree of difficulty to plunge us into frustration and defeat. The great achievements of those who have been here before us over the last 50 years must be honoured by our unshakable determination to take the

United Nations into the next millennium as the single most effective multilateral instrument for the betterment of mankind.

I believe that this Assembly can and will accomplish much to add to the list of tangible achievements both for the direct benefit of the peoples of the world and for the improvement of this Organization itself. We have the history, the vision and the leadership. Moreover, the urgency is clearly seen by us all. Let us resolve to apply ourselves as never before, and to live up to the great potential that resides in this Hall.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic):* I now call on Mr. Wolfgang Schussel, Deputy Prime Minister and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Austria.

Mr. Schussel (Austria): We are glad to see the General Assembly, the key organ in the reform process of the Organization, meet under a President who combines profound knowledge of the United Nations with a reputation for strong leadership.

My colleague from Ireland has already outlined the positions of the European Union, which we fully endorse. I will elaborate on a few points to which Austria attaches particular importance.

When discussing the need for reform a year ago, Heads of State and Government expressed their political will to give the twenty-first century a United Nations equipped, financed and structured to serve effectively the peoples in whose name it was established. However, insufficient progress has been made so far in implementing this commitment. While the Secretary-General, to whose spirited leadership of the Organization I should like to pay a warm personal tribute, has undertaken a number of important reform initiatives, the Working Groups of the General Assembly have made only limited progress. Much more needs to be done. And we must always bear in mind that reform is not mere downsizing, but pursuing our goals effectively and efficiently. Four principles should, in our view, guide our reform agenda. As the first priority and as a precondition for reform, we must fulfil our financial obligations in accordance with the United Nations Charter; we must give clear mandates and provide the necessary resources; we must ensure the competitiveness of the United Nations system; and we must eliminate duplication, waste and mismanagement.

We should like to see strong United Nations leadership in the following areas.

As regards human rights, the results of the World Conference on Human Rights form an integral part of the coordinated follow-up to recent United Nations conferences. Austria will play an active role in preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the five-year review of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action in 1998. Today, our main task is not to elaborate new international standards in the field of human rights but to ensure full respect for the broad body of existing norms and rules in all parts of the world. This requires the active involvement of the entire United Nations system. This includes United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) projects on governance; the United Nations Children's Fund's efforts in the field of juvenile justice; programmes of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Secretariat for the strengthening of criminal justice systems; and the integration of human rights elements into United Nations field missions. In the run-up to 1998, system-wide cooperation and integration in the field of human rights have to be improved.

Austria pays particular attention to the promotion and protection of minorities as a means both to prevent and to resolve conflicts. Respecting the rights of minorities is crucial for peaceful development and good neighbourly relations. The case of South Tyrol is an excellent example. Half a century after the conclusion of the 1946 Treaty of Paris between Austria and Italy — of fundamental importance for the survival of the Austrian minority — the South Tyroleans enjoy the protection of a carefully regulated autonomy, which increasingly serves as an inspiration in comparable situations elsewhere.

Turning next to drug control and organized crime, it is estimated that drug sales generate more than $120 billion annually, thus exceeding the gross domestic product of many United Nations Member States. This economic power of drug traffickers is a serious threat to the stability and the democratic and legal institutions of many countries. Drug abuse also has severe social consequences for societies and individuals. Therefore, drug control must remain a top priority for the United Nations. Austria will welcome the holding of a special session of the General Assembly in 1998 devoted to this question. In order to make that session a success, we should soon start our preparations at the national, regional and international levels.

Trafficking in illicit drugs goes hand in hand with transnational organized crime and money laundering, which can be fought only through intensified international cooperation. In this regard, we encourage closer cooperation between the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the Secretariat's crime Division.

I turn now to fight against the sexual exploitation of children. A phenomenon closely linked to organized crime is the sexual exploitation of children; this contemporary form of slavery can result in serious, life-long, even life-threatening consequences for the physical, psychological and social development of children. The rights of children and women being at the very heart of our concern, we would like in this respect to reiterate the importance we attach to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as to the recommendations of the recent Stockholm World Congress on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. We are convinced that only a global partnership uniting Governments, non-governmental organizations and relevant United Nations agencies can bring an end to the trafficking and exploitation of children and women for sexual purposes.

Peace-keeping remains the international community's major tool to assist parties to a conflict in the implementation of peace agreements or to provide a rapid response to complex emergencies. In view of lessons learned from previous missions, we actively support the improvement of the rapid deployment capability of the Organization, including the establishment of a rapidly deployable headquarters.

Currently, some 1,200 Austrians — troop contingents, military observers, civilian police and civilians — are serving in United Nations missions and in the Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We will continue to participate in such operations. In this context, I am pleased to announce that my country will participate in the system of stand-by arrangements. We will also continue to assist the United Nations in its efforts to improve the quality of peace-keeping personnel through our participation in the United Nations training assistance team programme. International training centres in Austria offer training programmes for military as well as civilian personnel. We have joined forces with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the strengthening of conflict prevention and peace-keeping capacities in Africa.

As regards preventive diplomacy, over the last few years, we have witnessed an increase in the deployment of small political field missions. They play an important role in the preventive diplomacy efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representatives, and in the coordination of peace-building initiatives. Austria encourages the Secretary-General to make more use of this cost-effective instrument. We therefore support his proposal to establish clear budgetary procedures ensuring a sound and predictable financial basis for such missions.

The United Nations took the lead in developing the concept of post-conflict peace-building. Today, not only the United Nations but also the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are elaborating concepts of how to assist in the consolidation of peace and the prevention of the recurrence of conflicts. The objective of peace-building is political, but it often requires action in the economic, social, humanitarian or human rights fields.

The broad variety of available instruments is amply demonstrated by a recent survey of the United Nations system's capabilities in post-conflict reconstruction compiled by the Vienna-based Reconstruction and Development Support Unit of the Secretariat.

The ability of the United Nations system to act in an integrated manner in peace-building represents a test for its overall ability to reform and to modernize. We call upon the Secretary-General to develop comprehensive criteria and operational guidelines, including on the question of leadership for peace-building activities. We also encourage the Secretary-General to intensify his cooperation with international financial institutions and other relevant actors in this field.

As regards regional conflicts, time constraints prevent me from addressing in detail the many situations in all parts of the world where the international community, often under the leadership of the United Nations, has attempted to bring conflicts and human suffering to an end — as in the Great Lakes region of Africa, Liberia and Afghanistan. I will limit myself to a conflict in our immediate neighbourhood, namely the situation in the Balkans: in the former Yugoslavia.

My country follows developments there with both great hope and great concern. The implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement lags behind our expectations, especially in the civilian field. However, we must not overlook the foremost achievement of this Agreement: the fact that a very brutal and bloody war was stopped

and that the road for Bosnia and Herzegovina's return to normalcy was paved. It is an encouraging sign that ballots, and no longer bullets, are in place.

The elections held on 14 September represent a vital step forward and indicate the Bosnian people's determination to continue with the peace process. The setting up of common institutions, as foreseen by the Dayton Agreement, is now the number-one task. Notwithstanding the primary responsibility of the parties themselves to fully implement the Dayton peace accords, it is indispensable that the international community not abandon the country after the expiration of the IFOR mandate by the end of this year. We will have to continue to assist the people and authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their efforts to rebuild a civil society and to strengthen reconciliation among ethnic groups.

Sustainable management of environmental resources to ensure both human progress and human survival poses a major challenge at the outset of the twenty-first century. At present, we are compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The United Nations has a crucial role to play in achieving a common understanding of sustainability and in promoting its implementation. We therefore attach great importance to next year's special session of the General Assembly on the overall review and appraisal of Agenda 21. The special session should not only assess the implementation of the Rio commitments, but should also elaborate a global consensus on new important areas such as sustainable consumption, production patterns, energy and transport.

The process of globalization also profoundly changes the parameters of social development in all countries. The World Summit for Social Development took up this challenge and agreed on a set of principles, goals and commitments to enhance the benefits and mitigate the negative effects of this process. We welcome the determination of the United Nations system to translate the outcome of the Copenhagen Summit into its operational work for the benefit of all people.

We are striving nationally to meet our commitments even in times of budgetary cuts. I avail myself of this opportunity to recall the Austrian invitation to hold a regional follow-up conference to the social Summit in Vienna at the end of 1997 or the beginning of 1998.

My next point is disarmament. A more cooperative approach to security is to provide a setting conducive to giving new impetus to international disarmament and arms control. Serious efforts must be undertaken to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and to strengthen the various arms control and non-proliferation regimes. At the same time, more attention should be devoted to areas of conventional disarmament, such as the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, small arms and arms transfers, as well as to the further development of universal regimes of transparency in armaments. The Wassenaar Arrangement, recently established in Vienna, will make an important contribution to international peace and security.

In response to the human tragedy of civilian landmine victims, Austria has been one of the first countries to establish a total moratorium on anti-personnel landmines, and is aiming for an agreement on a worldwide total ban on this scourge of humanity.

The approval of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) constitutes a milestone on our path towards a more secure future, leaving behind the nuclear weapons competition that defined the cold war. Austria welcomes the test moratoriums announced by all five declared nuclear-weapon States, and we call on all States to work on the rapid ratification of the CTBT in order to foster nuclear non-proliferation and to spare this planet further ecological damage.

The organization for the CTBT and, pending entry into force, its preparatory commission, will play a vital role in verifying the implementation of the test ban. Austria considers it an honour to host such an important international organization and will contribute its share to creating favourable working conditions. The position of Vienna, which already hosts the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), as the centre of global nuclear non-proliferation is further strengthened by the addition of crucial nuclear verification facilities.

This fight can be won only by pursuing a double-tracked approach: on one track, non-proliferation is a precondition for ridding ourselves of the risk of nuclear destruction. On the other track, the nuclear-weapon States are called upon to honour their obligation under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to disarm their nuclear arsenals with the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of these weapons.

The United Nations should continue to play a leading role in the progressive development of international law. Austria highly esteems the work of the International Law Commission. Currently the elaboration

of a statute for an international criminal court is of utmost importance. Austria strongly supports the early establishment of the court, to end the widespread culture of impunity.

Finally, I would like to mention the United Nations Office at Vienna: our strong commitment to the United Nations also manifests itself in Austria's role as one of the headquarters of the Organization. United Nations programmes and agencies based in Vienna represent highly important instruments in international efforts to meet new threats to peace, security and development. I am referring to the key role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in preventing nuclear proliferation; that of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and the United Nations crime Division, which fight against drug abuse, money laundering, organized crime and corruption; of the Office for Outer Space Affairs, the principal United Nations body for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space; of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the central coordinating agency for information, analysis, advice and assistance in the field of sustainable industrial development; and of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the international centre for the promotion, harmonization and unification of the law of international trade. We would like to pay tribute to UNCITRAL for the able manner in which it is carrying out its task. The Austrian Government is looking forward to celebrating the Commission's thirtieth anniversary on the occasion of its next meeting, in spring 1997 in Vienna.

Over the years, the IAEA and the United Nations Office at Vienna have understood the importance of building a solid reputation for good and lean management. UNIDO has undergone drastic reforms, streamlining its secretariat and clearly defining its priorities and areas of concern. As one of the host countries of the United Nations, we are particularly committed to the reform efforts being undertaken by these organizations and by the United Nations system as a whole. We shall support all efforts to fulfil the commitments we all agreed on last year, to make the United Nations fit for the twenty-first century.

Address by Mr. Janez Drnovšek, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia.

Mr. Janez Drnovšek, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia, His Excellency Mr. Janez Drnovšek, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Drnovšek (Slovenia): Please allow me to congratulate the President and his country, Malaysia, on his election to the presidency of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly. We hold his many contributions to the work of the United Nations in very high regard and we are convinced that his wisdom will guide this session of the General Assembly to a successful completion.

I also take advantage of this occasion to thank Professor Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal for his wise and dignified leadership of the General Assembly at its jubilee fiftieth session.

The first half-century of the United Nations has elapsed and the General Assembly is meeting at a time of great opportunities. Seldom has the United Nations enjoyed such a high level of freedom from friction in the relations among the major Powers of the world. Moreover, our time is also one of profound and promising change. Never before has the world been better equipped to seize the opportunities of economic and technological development for the benefit of all. The democratic transformation which has taken place in large parts of the world has substantially improved the quality of life and added important opportunities for a large part of the world's population.

However, very serious problems persist. Poverty and social disintegration, environmental degradation and new forms of threat to international peace and security are serious dangers to our common future. The fact that our world is no longer threatened by cold war rivalries offers little consolation if we think of the dangers which cast their shadows on our path towards the future. The unique opportunities of our time can be forfeited.

Never before has the time been so precious and the need for effective global action so clear. The United Nations must be able to adjust so as to become more effective and more successful in addressing the challenges at hand. The essence of the principal task before the United Nations today can be captured in two words:

adjustment and modernization. The compelling need to adjust and modernize the Organization should be guiding its activities, in particular those aiming at its reform.

However, the United Nations experience of the reform efforts of the past year has not been entirely satisfactory. The progress of various working groups of the General Assembly has been slow, a fact to be noted with concern. The present session of the General Assembly and its general debate should provide fresh incentives and energize the process of reform, which should proceed in a coherent and balanced manner.

The process of downsizing the Secretariat, while being welcome and necessary, should become part of a wider change characterized by a clear definition of the priorities of the United Nations and by an adequate allocation of its human and material resources. Greater discipline must be achieved in the financing of the United Nations. This should be accompanied by a new, more balanced scale of assessments. Furthermore, innovative forms of financing should be devised, in particular in such domains as the protection of environment and sustainable development. Last but not least, there is, in several parts of the United Nations, a need for structural change. The necessary expansion and reform of the Security Council — which includes reasonable enlargement — is a case in point. It is obvious that the efforts at reform should go hand in hand with the implementation of the basic tasks of the United Nations.

The preservation of international peace and security is the principal objective of the United Nations. One of the areas of implementation of this objective that is constantly gaining importance is cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the common efforts for world peace. We see possibilities in different parts of the world for the creation of durable security arrangements based on regional organizations and their cooperation with the United Nations.

We shall continue to support the efforts for coordination and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations through such methods as increased consultation, diplomatic support, mutual operational support and joint operations, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.

In Europe, the role of such regional organizations as the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe is constantly growing. We welcome and support the growing complementarity and cooperation between these organizations and the United Nations.

Disarmament continues to be among the most important areas in which the role of the United Nations is fundamental. It can be said that, in recent years, the United Nations has solidified its leading and coordinating role in this area. The agreement on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons achieved last year and the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention are witness to that.

Slovenia welcomes the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we signed yesterday. Slovenia took an active approach from the very beginning to the CTBT negotiations. We deeply believe that only strict implementation of the Treaty can contribute to a safer world in the future.

The interaction between the Conference on Disarmament and the relevant United Nations bodies has intensified. We should strive to improve further the disarmament machinery. In this context, we note with regret that the project of expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament remains incomplete. We continue to believe that all States willing and able to contribute to international disarmament efforts should be enabled to participate in the Conference on Disarmament as full members. Slovenia wishes to be and is capable of being among the members of the Conference.

Slovenia also supports activities of the international community needed to limit and eventually eliminate the use of inhumane and excessively injurious weapons — including anti-personnel landmines — and is ready to take an active part in these efforts.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the process of return to normality has started. Less than a year ago, Slovenia joined all the members of the international community in expressing appreciation to the United States of America and all others involved in the preparation of the Dayton Agreement.

After many years of tragically futile exercises, the moment has come for a decisive step towards real peace in Bosnia and in the Balkans. The military action of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization gave credibility to the written word and created conditions for a comprehensive effort to rebuild Bosnia and Herzegovina economically, politically and socially. In Slovenia, we welcomed the holding of the presidential and parliamentarian elections which took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina 10 days ago

as a positive step forward and as a substantial contribution to peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Within the framework of post-conflict management of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, there is a growing need to ensure economic reconstruction and provide adequate economic aid. Slovenia is actively participating in the international efforts for the economic reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina and still hosts many Bosnian refugees.

Slovenia is a young country that obtained United Nations membership in May 1992. Over the past five years of independence, Slovenia achieved positive results in the process of political and economic transformation. Growing cooperation with its neighbours and in the region enabled Slovenia to reach a high degree of economic and political stability. We strongly believe that such a policy is to be observed as a contribution to the sustainable stability of the region.

After a successful transformation, Slovenia is now ready to take its share of responsibility not only for regional arrangements, but also for international peace and stability. That is why Slovenia seeks to become a Security Council member for the 1998-1999 term: to participate actively in the Council's central role in developing an effective system of global security at a time when the Security Council faces significant challenges to international peace and security. We firmly believe that Slovenia is able to meet all expectations and to work with other member States so as to make a full contribution to fulfilling the demanding tasks of the Security Council.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of Slovenia for the statement he has just made.

Dr. Janez Drnovšek, Prime Minister of Slovenia, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I now call on the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Cooperation of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Poos.

Mr. Poos (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first of all to congratulate the President most warmly on his election to serve as President of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

I also wish to convey my thanks to the previous President, Mr. Freitas do Amaral, for the commitment, skill and poise with which he led our work at the last session of the Assembly.

I would also like to convey my appreciation to our Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his ongoing outstanding work for our Organization since beginning of his term.

The views of the Luxembourg Government on the major international issues are the same as those expressed by our European Union partners. They were presented to the Assembly yesterday morning by Mr. Dick Spring, President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ireland.

Luxembourg learned with great satisfaction that our General Assembly, by an overwhelming majority, had adopted and opened for signature the resolution containing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Yesterday, on behalf of the Luxembourg Government, I signed that document, which marks substantial progress towards the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the creation of a safer and more humane world. I hope that the parties concerned will continue to work to create the right conditions for the rapid entry into force of this Treaty.

Also in the area of disarmament, I support without reserve the United Nations work on the question of anti-personnel landmines, which day after day, long after the guns have fallen silent in a conflict, continue to claim countless victims. If there is any evil which must be eradicated, this is it.

I rejoice in the significant progress which has been achieved, in less than a year, in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. I welcome the holding of elections on 14 September, which marks a decisive stage for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnians, Serbs and Croats must now organize their cooperation by first setting up common institutions.

I regard these elections as a first, important step in the framework of a process of democratization and stabilization that must be carried further. Its success will depend above all on the Bosnian parties. It will also depend on neighbouring countries, in particular Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Lastly, it will depend on the support of the international community. My Government is in favour of continued international

civilian and military action in order to create the environment required to preserve peace and prevent a return to war.

Luxembourg is concerned by the check to the peace process in the Middle East that has followed the change of Government in Israel. We take the view that there is no alternative to this complex and fragile process: the fruit of arduous negotiations. We urge our friends in Israel to pursue this process, to comply with and execute the commitments undertaken pursuant to the Oslo agreements and to avoid creating fresh obstacles. We fear that any other policy may generate further tension and once again trigger a spiral of violence that would inflict suffering on all the peoples of the region. The alarming events that took place on the West Bank today threaten to destroy the results of several years of effort to achieve a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

The Luxembourg Government condemns the recent attacks launched by the Government of Saddam Hussein on the Kurdish population of northern Iraq. It was inevitable that measures would be taken to react to this fresh offensive. We call for a complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces and for full respect for the territorial integrity of Iraq. We hope that the implementation of the "oil-for-food" resolution may take place without delay in order to relieve the hardships suffered by the civilian population of that country.

The situation in the Great Lakes region of Africa, in particular in Burundi, continues to give us the greatest cause for concern. I fully support the efforts of the United Nations, in close cooperation with the Organization of African Unity, to avert both the occurrence in Burundi of a tragedy such as occurred in Rwanda and a deterioration of the situation which could plunge the region into war.

Mr. Salifou (Niger), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Over the last year, the United Nations has substantially cut the number of its peace-keeping operations. This reduction in our activities and the set-backs that we have witnessed in the past should not, however, diminish our efforts to enhance the United Nations capacity to avert, prevent the spread of and halt conflicts, and to save human lives.

It is utterly unfair to criticize the United Nations whenever a peace-keeping operation runs into difficulties. Many of the shortcomings attributed to the United Nations could be resolved if all Member States undertook to pay their contributions to our Organization and, especially, make available to it the resources that it needs. For this reason, Luxembourg supports the ongoing work and reflection aimed at equipping the Organization with a rapid-intervention force that would enable it to react to crises in a timely fashion. Where non-military means have failed, it should be possible to deploy well-trained and properly equipped peace-keeping contingents in the field very promptly in order to give practical effect to the Security Council's decisions.

Greater responsibility should henceforth be given to regional organizations. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) is nowadays playing a leading role in conflict management in Europe and the Caucasus. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in the former Yugoslavia and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in the Great Lakes region are doing the same. Other regional and subregional organizations in Africa, Latin America and elsewhere are performing similar tasks with the support of the United Nations.

International security begins with the security of the individual, with respect for his fundamental rights and his protection against any violation of those rights, including the actions of his own Government. Nothing, therefore, can justify violations of human rights, which by their very nature have universal value. Our Organization plays an important role in developing international machinery designed to provide effective protection for human rights. This role takes the form, among others, of the efforts to carry out systematic investigations and enquiries with a view to sanctioning those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Luxembourg supports the early creation of an international criminal court, which would be a decisive step forward in ensuring respect for the principles of international law.

Among the most vulnerable human beings are our children, and they therefore deserve special protection. The adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child marks a major advance. Scrupulously applied, that Convention will be an invaluable instrument in safeguarding children against physical and psychological violence. In 1995 my Government proposed to the United Nations a similar, indeed, a complementary initiative, to eliminate the exploitation of child labour. I welcome this Assembly adoption of that proposal designed to come to the aid of the tens of millions of children forced to work from an early age. This effort should be strengthened and

further pursued. Luxembourg also hails the results of the Stockholm World Congress on the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children. My Government is resolved to foster international cooperation in the prevention and suppression of sexual exploitation of children in order to effectively protect and safeguard children at the international level against such criminal practices.

The globalization of the world economy is bringing about profound changes in international relations. A veritable revolution in information and communication technologies reducing geographic distances to nothing has led to a speeding up of business transactions and financial flows, as well as increased integration of markets. Generally accepted ideas have been turned upside down, and serious questions have been raised even among industrialized countries, where unemployment has grown to alarming proportions.

At the same time, we note that a significant number of developing countries remain on the sidelines of development and remain in great poverty. At a time when our Organization proclaimed 1996 International Year for the Eradication of Poverty, more than 1.5 billion human beings continue to live in a state of absolute poverty. We cannot remain indifferent to this situation. What should particularly disturb us is the inequality gap, which is widening both within countries and between the countries of the North and the South. This is a dangerous source of new tensions and conflicts.

The United Nations Development Programme's latest report on human development speaks of worldwide social fragmentation. It underscores the widening disparities between rich and poor States and increased imbalances in societies between inhabitants of the same country. The population explosion and uneven access to the fruits of technological progress further compound these distortions. This trend is likely to trigger increasingly massive migrations within countries and from poor countries to richer ones.

In order to remedy this situation, I propose to develop a new strategy based on four main courses of action. First, we should provide follow-up to, and translate into operational activities, the results of the major conferences held since the beginning of this decade in Rio, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen, Beijing and, most recently, in Istanbul. The World Food Summit scheduled by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for November and the special session on sustainable development in the spring of 1997 are also opportunities to define an integrated programme of action to foster human development.

Secondly, we must halt the persistent decline of funds made available for development, a symptom of "donor fatigue". In each of our countries we must launch a new movement of solidarity to benefit the poorest and least developed countries. The Government of Luxembourg has decided to increase year by year its contribution to cooperation for development. Our intention is to achieve the target of devoting 0.7 per cent of our gross national product to official development assistance before the end of this decade. A significant portion of these funds will be made available to the various funds and programmes of the United Nations system. This is not simply a question of solidarity and social justice on a world scale; it is, above all, a preventive policy designed to contribute, however modestly, to peace by encouraging development.

The third main course of action is to strengthen the United Nations capacity to act in the economic and social field. That strengthening requires courageous reforms of its structures. Above and beyond the proposals of the Summit of major industrialized countries at Lyon, which I welcome, I advocate a single rigorous coordination structure for all economic and social activities and, especially, a concerted restructuring of the bodies and mandates concerned. In this context, I note with interest, the proposal of the XX Congress of the Socialist International, which took place recently in this very building, calling for the setting up of integrated economic institutions on the regional and international levels and for the setting up of a United Nations economic security council.

Fourthly, we must develop cooperation with the representatives of organized civil society, which is to say, the non-governmental organizations. The participation of non-governmental organizations in international organizations reinforces, in a sense, the political legitimacy of those international bodies. The representatives of civil society nowadays play a key role in the activities of the United Nations system, whether in the promotion of human rights and democracy, in humanitarian assistance or in cooperation for development. They make an invaluable contribution not only to the Organization's operational activities but also to its thinking processes, as attested to by the significant participation of non-governmental organizations in the preparation, holding and follow-up of the major world conferences organized by the United Nations.

This new dimension of our work was also highlighted at the congress of the World Federation of United Nations Associations, whose fiftieth-anniversary meeting, I am proud to note, was held in Luxembourg a little over a month ago.

The financial situation of our Organization continues to be a matter of grave concern. As of July, the United Nations cash flow was exhausted, and this situation can only worsen between now and the end of the year.

Any attempt at a radical reform of the system will be futile if we continue to neglect the fundamental need to put it on an adequate and reliable financial footing. The United Nations cannot discharge its important responsibilities effectively if it is reduced to constant worry about making ends meet.

Admittedly, the Organization could do even more to control its expenditure and enhance its effectiveness. Greater attention should be given, *inter alia*, to the question of establishing each State's assessed contribution, which should be based on objective criteria and reflect each country's real ability to pay. However, the crisis will be overcome only if each Member State fulfils its obligations by making full, timely and unconditional payment of its financial contribution. I therefore unreservedly support the proposals made by the European Union in this regard.

In the ongoing reform process, one aspect is of particular significance. Within our Organization, the Security Council bears unique responsibilities as the organ entrusted with preventing and resolving conflicts. One of the greatest lessons to be learnt from the experiences and setbacks of recent years is that Security Council members must, if they wish to preserve its credibility, demonstrate their determination to enforce their decisions, once taken.

The credibility and effectiveness of the Council with regard to peace-keeping and international security will be reinforced by the establishment of more open, transparent and collegial decision-making processes while maintaining close consultation with the countries supplying *matériel* and contingents. The not-insignificant progress made in this respect in the recent past should be integrated into the system.

In addition, the Council's legitimacy, and probably the quality of its decisions, would also benefit from a readjustment in membership. The enlargement of the Council should take into account the ability of member States to contribute to peace-keeping and to the achievement of the Organization's goals. A better balance must be struck between industrialized and developing countries.

The passing of the bipolar world has freed our planet from the ideological, political and military fetters that impeded to an extraordinary degree our capacity to act. Relieved of the threat of global confrontation and nuclear holocaust, we are now faced with a series of worldwide problems, old and new, that includes underdevelopment, environmental degradation, the proliferation of all kinds of weapons, terrorism, ethnic conflicts, drug trafficking, violence and crime in all its guises.

Luxembourg is convinced that the solution to those problems lies not in isolationism, nor in nationalism, nor in fundamentalism of any description. We would also be deluding ourselves were we to put our trust solely in the market and private initiative to remedy all humanity's ills.

Only through an approach based on cooperation, solidarity, tolerance and mutual esteem can we tackle those problems successfully at both the regional and the world levels.

This has been the approach of the European Union and its member States, which have succeeded in attaining, in Europe, a level of stability and prosperity hitherto unknown. The approach is based on the concept of democracy and of a market economy that is not uncontrolled but socially responsible, one in which the State fully shoulders its responsibilities in the areas of health, education and social justice. The system requires constant adjustments, but its principles and bases are not subject to debate. Other parts of the world have also successfully entered into a process of cooperation and regional integration.

On the world level, the United Nations is the only truly universal Organization. We must work at this level to make a contribution vital to the solution of global problems, one that will complement the efforts being made at the regional level.

That is the new and important responsibility that became evident in the course of the events and meetings that occurred the world over in commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations last year. There was emphasis on the need to set up new structures and to

reform the United Nations, to give it the requisite capacity for review, action and cooperation.

It is our hope that, with a heightened awareness of the interests of all mankind we, the representatives of the States Members of the United Nations, will succeed in displaying the vision, courage and political resolve needed to make our Organization an effective instrument capable of facing the challenges of the third millennium.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of South Africa, His Excellency Mr. Alfred B. Nzo.

Mr. Nzo (South Africa): I should like first to extend warm congratulations to Mr. Razali Ismail on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its fifty-first session. We have no doubt that the session will benefit from his known skills as he discharges his responsibilities.

I should also like to commend Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral for the excellent work done during his term of office.

I should also like to express to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our continued confidence in his guidance of the Organization.

Allow me at the outset of this, my first opportunity to speak before the General Assembly, to express the deep gratitude and appreciation of the people and Government of South Africa for the decision taken by the Assembly at the fiftieth session to relieve the new democratic Government of South Africa of the burden of the contribution to the United Nations budget accumulated over the period of two decades when the apartheid regime was excluded from participating in the work of the General Assembly. We recognize that that action involved considerable sacrifice, both for the United Nations and for its Member States, and that it was also consistent with the historic commitment of support for our struggle for democracy.

South Africa remains committed to achieving a world free of all weapons of mass destruction and to addressing the issue of the proliferation of conventional weapons. We therefore welcome the adoption of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which we signed yesterday.

Our support for the CTBT as an instrument of disarmament and non-proliferation is based upon the view that this Treaty is an integral part of a process which will lead to the full implementation of the nuclear-disarmament obligations set out in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

An important milestone along this road was the adoption of the Pelindaba Treaty creating the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. This Treaty will contribute greatly to measures aimed at achieving a world free from nuclear weapons. Further steps are needed in the process to bring the world closer to the ultimate goal of the elimination of nuclear weapons. The next step is for African States to cooperate with parties to the other nuclear-weapon-free-zones in the Pacific and Latin American regions with a view to promoting a southern hemisphere-wide nuclear-weapon-free zone. We are heartened by the unprecedented step of four nuclear-weapon States' signing the relevant Protocols of the Pelindaba Treaty simultaneously with African States in April 1996, while the fifth has indicated that it will sign shortly. South Africa, as stated previously in other forums, will also work for the commencement next year of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

South Africa also supports and will work for the establishment of an ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament. This committee can identify and negotiate the necessary steps by which we can achieve the ultimate goal of the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. We also look forward to the early ratification of the Chemical Weapons Convention by those States that have not yet done so.

It is not just the threat posed by all weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery that is of serious concern to my Government, but also the build-up of conventional weapons beyond a level which can be considered legitimate for the purposes of self-defence. Conventional weapons are, in fact, the cause of most of the deaths and suffering of millions of people in conflicts around the world today.

My Government would therefore like to encourage all States Members of the United Nations to support and participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and lend active support to General Assembly resolution 50/70 B on small arms and its panel of governmental experts mandated to assist the Secretary-General to prepare a report on small arms. We would also encourage Member States to support the worldwide efforts to secure the elimination of anti-personnel

landmines. In order to alleviate the suffering caused by landmines, my Government is committed to reinforcing international cooperation. As a country with advanced demining technology, we are pleased to be making a modest contribution to international efforts to unearth landmines.

South Africa will continue to cooperate in the various international forums dedicated to the non-proliferation of the technologies and equipment which could be used in the development of weapons of mass destruction, and in discouraging any destabilizing build up of conventional weapons.

Our harrowing experience under the tyranny of apartheid has imposed a duty on us to place a high premium on the promotion of human rights. In this regard, our Constitution contains an entrenched and fully justiciable Bill of Rights. In addition, plans are advanced for the establishment of an office on the status of women to provide a mechanism within the Government to act as a monitor to ensure that a gender perspective is integrated into all publicly-funded policies and programmes. The South African Government regards it as a priority to contribute to the efforts of the international community to combat the violation of human rights.

In South Africa, and in the region as a whole, processes of democratization have released a host of productive human and political resources. This has, in many ways, contributed to the achievement of peace, security and stability in our region.

Our vision for southern Africa is one of the highest possible degree of economic cooperation, mutual assistance and the joint planning of regional development initiatives, leading to full economic integration.

Civil conflicts have ravaged many parts of Africa. We welcome the positive developments which have taken place in Rwanda and Sierra Leone. However, serious conflict persists in Liberia, Burundi and Somalia. The South African Government is committed to playing an active role in the ongoing efforts of the international community to assist the people of Burundi to bring about lasting peace and national reconciliation. President Mandela recently appointed a special representative for Burundi, who has been given the task of searching for a viable solution in close coordination with other special representatives and with countries in the region. These efforts need to be supplemented by close cooperation between the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations.

At the same time, we are heartened by the progress, albeit tentative so far, towards peace in Angola. Representatives of Member countries assembled here will agree that the people of Angola deserve peace at last as an instrument for — or rather, as an important ingredient of — embarking on the road to sustainable economic development and social advancement. Our Government commends the efforts of the United Nations, and especially those of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Angola, Maître Alioune Blondin Beye, who has with tremendous patience and commitment guided the Angolan peace process to the stage where it is today. We owe it to the people of Angola to see this process through to its logical conclusion.

Through the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, member States of the OAU are collectively committed to restoring peace and security on our continent. In support of the OAU mechanism, we are pleased that the Southern African Development Community has recently created an organ on politics, defence and security. These efforts reflect Africa's primary concern with issues of preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution.

South Africa welcomed the spirit of dialogue and realism that had begun to characterize the relations between Israel and Palestine and was hopeful that this positive development would gradually replace the centuries of conflict in the Middle East. That hope was further reinforced by the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements reached in Oslo. My Government is concerned, however, that recent developments in the Middle East are likely to reverse and jeopardize the peace process. We therefore urge all the players in the Middle East to rise to the occasion and, in a spirit of reconciliation, to move steadfastly towards a lasting peace in the region.

We are seriously concerned by the marginalization, particularly of African countries among the least-developed countries, from the process of globalization and liberalization. In this regard, closer attention should be given to the need to address the external debt burden of the least-developed countries, especially those in Africa. Problems associated with the debt burden and its servicing still persist and frustrate the rate at which the

continent can extricate itself from the vicious cycle of poverty.

We therefore welcome the Mid-term Review of the Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and recognize the importance of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, as well as the need to underpin its success through appropriate and adequate resources.

In this context we also welcome the designation of 1996 as the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. We hope that the international community will realize this objective in clear recognition of the challenges facing it.

We welcome the World Food Summit, which is to convene in Rome in November 1996 and which will afford the international community the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to ensuring that poverty eradication strategies are fully integrated into all initiatives of the United Nations system.

My Government is encouraged by the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II). The results of the Conference represent the collaborative efforts of the international community to develop a consensus view on the fundamental need to provide access to adequate shelter and infrastructure for all people. Continued support for initiatives at the national and international level to realize and implement the necessary follow-up to HABITAT II should now receive priority attention.

It was an honour for South Africa to host the ninth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in April 1996. My Government believes that the sound basis for cooperation established by UNCTAD IX and the call for partnership for growth and development outlined in the Midrand Declaration must be carried forward and implemented through the General Assembly and other forums. South Africa is particularly keen to ensure that the framework which we adopted at Midrand for the reform of UNCTAD is translated into an effective facility for the developing world.

South Africa also wishes to underscore the fundamental importance of international cooperation in the environmental and development fields. Sustained political commitment through global partnership remains essential for our continuing international cooperation efforts. It is for this reason that we believe that the 1997 special session of the General Assembly will provide an excellent opportunity to reaffirm the principles and objectives of the Rio Declaration's Agenda 21.

South Africa, a country with a long coastline, has considerable interest in matters relating to the law of the sea. We are thus pleased that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and its implementing Agreement have entered into force, and that the International Sea-Bed Authority and related structures, of which South Africa is proud to be a member, have been established.

In my statement to the General Assembly during the fiftieth session, I expressed the sincere hope that significant progress would be made in bringing about the establishment of an international criminal court. It is therefore gratifying to see that the Preparatory Committee on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, which was established during the fiftieth session, has made much progress in bringing this idea to fruition. What is now needed is to take this process forward by holding as soon as possible a diplomatic conference where the statute of the proposed court can be finalized.

It is widely acknowledged that the favourable changes in the international climate are conducive to the reform and modernization of the United Nations in order to prepare the Organization to respond effectively to the challenges of the twenty-first century.

I wish to recall that in his address on 23 October 1995 at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly, President Mandela, said:

> "Indeed the United Nations has to reassess its role, redefine its profile and reshape its structures. It should truly reflect the diversity of our universe and ensure equity among the nations in the exercise of power within the system of international relations in general, and the Security Council in particular." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 37th meeting, p. 6)*

In this regard, my delegation wishes to register its disappointment at the slow pace of advancement, with no end in sight to the deliberations of the Working Group on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters relating to the Security Council. In this regard we support

the recommendation in the report of the Working Group that the Group should continue with its work. We would also urge Member States to demonstrate flexibility and accommodation in their future deliberations and to display the necessary political will in order to reach a common understanding.

In the declaration that the Heads of State and Government adopted on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations on 24 October 1995, it was noted that

> "In order to carry out its work effectively, the United Nations must have adequate resources. Member States must meet, in full and on time, their obligation to bear the expenses of the Organization, as apportioned by the General Assembly. That apportionment should be established on the basis of criteria agreed to and considered to be fair by Member States." (*A/50/48, para. 15*)

My delegation has taken note of the progress of the Working Group on the financial situation in highlighting the problems facing the Organization, and urges all Member States to pay what is legally due as soon as possible in order that we may direct our energies to the real problems facing the world at this time. As we approach the twenty-first century, let us together resolve to redefine the role and shape of the United Nations and render this institution better equipped to carry out the important task of advancing peace and development in the world.

Address by Mr. Basdeo Panday, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. Basdeo Panday, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted to the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Mr. Basdeo Panday, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. Panday (Trinidad and Tobago): It is a great honour for me to extend to Mr. Razali Ismail our warmest congratulations, on behalf of the delegation of Trinidad and Tobago, on his election as President of this session of the General Assembly.

As the United Nations begins the second half-century of its existence, and as the international community seeks to renew and reshape the Organization to deal with the challenges of the approaching millennium, the Trinidad and Tobago delegation is particularly pleased to see the stewardship of the General Assembly in the hands of a leader and a friend of Mr. Razali's calibre.

My delegation would also like to express its deep appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral of Portugal, for the able manner in which he presided over the historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

Today more than ever, we live in a global age, an age of immeasurable possibilities and opportunities engendered by advances in technology, the information revolution and globalization; but it is also an age full of peril, one characterized by complex and myriad challenges, many of which we have yet to understand fully or come to terms with.

In this age of globalization and fragmentation, traditional national and international structures are becoming increasingly inadequate to deal with current realities. Nation States are also more frequently confronting the need to find acceptable means by which to yield elements of their sovereignty through regional and multilateral action, in order to deal effectively with global forces that are invariably transnational in nature.

In this sea of change in international relations, the whole concept of international security has increasingly moved away from the bipolar view, concerned largely with military security, to one which assigns a central role to sustainable development and the welfare of the individual. The major actors in the international arena are no longer solely nation States, but also economic agents with a global reach and non-governmental organizations with a growing global influence.

Yet these powerful forces that are inexorably pulling us together are also simultaneously tearing us apart, engendering fragmentation, reactivating age-old conflicts, and threatening more than ever to marginalize and leave behind large segments of humanity in the march to progress. Among some of the more powerful and industrialized countries, the fears of active integration

and engagement are leading to temptations to look inward and to become more isolationist and more protectionist. In addition, the problems of persistent poverty, increasing unemployment, debilitating debt, declining levels of official development assistance, environmental degradation, drug abuse and drug trafficking, crime, terrorism and social disintegration have combined to present a formidable array of challenges, which, if left unaddressed, threaten to overwhelm us and further marginalize the vulnerable and disadvantaged among us.

In this new global environment, we are at a critical crossroads, and in many ways the decisions that confront us in the international community on the eve of the twenty-first century are no less important than those that confronted us at the end of the war to end all wars.

In this evolving global society, the choices are clear. Will we allow the world to drift towards the dangerous anarchy of spheres of influence and unchecked confrontation? Or will we commit ourselves to greater cooperation inherent in the call to global neighbourhood action? Will we allow ethnic conflicts and "ethnic cleansing" to continue? Or will we resolutely resist the primitive impulses by devising mechanisms to avoid repetitions of these phenomena, wherever they occur?

Will we grasp the new opportunity for global prosperity, or will we allow the common global enemies to overwhelm us? Will we help to alleviate the crisis in multilateralism and give to the world of the twenty-first century a reformed United Nations, true to the ideals of the founding fathers, or will we increasingly move in the direction of unilateralism, seeking to use the United Nations for narrow self-interest? Finally, will we give to the world a new global order, true to the letter and spirit of the fiftieth anniversary Declaration, and based on the sustainable development agenda of the recent global conferences, or will we build a world of two societies, one getting progressively richer and the other progressively poorer?

We must not be afraid of challenges. Trinidad and Tobago, as a small developing island State, with all the concomitant vulnerability and fragility, has embarked on an aggressive, outward-oriented strategy of development. This strategy has been informed by the need to optimize our ability to participate in a global economy that is becoming increasingly knowledge-based, fiercely competitive and volatile. Our development strategy has as its basic objective the attainment of broad-based economic growth with social equity. It assigns a special emphasis to trade, investment, tourism, agriculture, services and the environment, and it seeks, through a political process of inclusiveness and empowerment, to mobilize all of our human resources in the task of building a sustainable democracy.

In November 1995, the new Government of Trinidad and Tobago, which I have the honour to lead, assumed office through the medium of the ballot box. The peaceful and democratic transfer of power that took place at that time was further ample testimony to the political maturity of our peoples, and the political stability that we in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean have been fortunate to enjoy.

In any democracy, however, one must be eternally vigilant, constantly striving to enhance the democratic tradition and strengthen the democratic process. It is in this context that I have sought to establish a Government of National Unity, committed to partnership-building at all levels. Special emphasis has been placed on the devolution of power from central to local government authorities, so as to facilitate greater participation in the democratic process. A National Multipartite Commission, comprising representatives of labour, business, Government, non-governmental organizations and the Inter-Religious Organization, has been established and entrusted with the task of formulating a comprehensive plan of action to take us into the twenty-first century. The aim of these and other measures is to build a truly participatory society, empowering all of our peoples.

In the social arena, we have sought to create a viable social pact among business, labour and Government, built on consultation, partnership and consensus, so as to provide stability, trust and transparency in industrial relations. We have also sought, through our social programmes, to place special emphasis on the disadvantaged and dispossessed, with a view to providing them with the necessary support, training and skills for effective participation in our society. In this regard, a Change Management Unit for Poverty Eradication and Equity Building has been established under the authority of a senior Cabinet Minister. The unit is entrusted with the responsibility of formulating an integrated, multi-sectoral and sustained approach to poverty eradication, and ensuring its implementation in all facets of the Government's economic and social policies. As a complement to this Unit, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago will, on 24 October 1996 — United Nations Day — set up a National Social Development Council to mobilize national action to deal with the homeless and the poor. This innovative approach

to poverty eradication is being implemented in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme, which has provided timely support in this, the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty. In keeping with the spirit of Beijing and the Platform for Action of the Beijing Conference, a vigorous policy and legislative agenda is being formulated and implemented through a consultative process, the objective being to optimize the role of women as equal partners in the development process.

With regard to the environment, a comprehensive legislative and policy framework has been put in place to respond to the demands of sustainable development. This new environmental regime will serve to ensure a "greening" of the Government's own operations, while simultaneously engaging the public and industry in a partnership for responsible management, protection and conservation of the environment.

Trinidad and Tobago's economic programme places a premium on trade, with the private sector as the engine of growth in the economy. Some of the essential elements of the strategy are the attraction of private investment flows, creation of increased market access, and the implementation of an appropriate industrial policy. This is being achieved through the pursuit of a sound and stable macroeconomic policy, supported by a prudent and disciplined fiscal and monetary stance, and the delivery of an investor-friendly institutional legal framework.

We in Trinidad and Tobago are under no illusions. All of our national efforts will be in vain if we do not have a supportive regional and international environment, as well as access to a fair, open and non-discriminatory international trading regime. Regional integration has always been a fundamental component of the development strategy of Trinidad and Tobago. Accordingly, our Republic has built strategic alliances through the Caribbean Community, the Rio Group and, more recently, the Association of Caribbean States, comprising countries of the wider Caribbean. We continue to be engaged actively in efforts to deepen and broaden the integration process within the region through initiatives that we hope will culminate in formal relationships with the Central American Common Market, the Andean Pact and the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR). Our vision for the future is a single free-trade area in the western hemisphere.

For small States like Trinidad and Tobago, greater regional integration and cooperation are imperative if we are to minimize the negative and pervasive effects of globalization, while simultaneously laying the foundations for our increased capacity to navigate the turbulent waters of the expanding global economy.

Regionalism is a critical priority, but in today's world it must be conceived as a natural and essential complement to wider international cooperation. The common evils of the twenty-first century will require a common approach, a common commitment. I can think of no other organization more uniquely placed or more legitimate than the United Nations to foster the global conscience, to fashion the necessary understanding, to build the mutual partnerships, and to organize the global cooperative effort.

In the field of sustainable development, the continuum of global conferences, from Rio to Istanbul, have laid down a global agenda, a development blueprint for the twenty-first century. Yet as discussions on the Agenda for Development have shown, there is a crisis of commitment, particularly on the part of the developed countries, to provide the required resources. "Donor fatigue" and declining levels of official development assistance threaten to render meaningless the global understanding, consensus and Programmes of Action forged in respect of the major issues and problems of our times.

This negative mood imperils all of us, for it threatens to subject some one fifth of the world's population, who live in poverty, to a life of perpetual despair. But more than that, it ignores the fact that the gap between the haves and the have-nots continues to grow alongside the growth in world trade. It forgets the message inherent in the common problems of our time: that whether we like it or not, our progress, and increasingly our security, is tied to that of our neighbours, no matter how poor or how distant they may be. Finally, it ignores the generally acknowledged fact that preventive action to deal with the root causes of conflict is less costly and more effective than corrective action.

Trinidad and Tobago also attaches the highest priority to the fight against drug abuse and drug trafficking. We have intensified our coordination activities at the national level, and have systematically put in place cooperative mechanisms with other Caribbean and Latin American countries, as well as with other States whose involvement is critical to the success of national and regional efforts. We believe that the

violence, the corruption and the human despair which this menace wreaks on societies in all corners of the globe, should leave no doubt as to the imperative need for the United Nations to accord priority attention to this question. Trinidad and Tobago is therefore fully supportive of the call for the convening in 1997 of an international conference on this subject. My delegation wishes to commend in particular the United Nations International Drug Control Programme for its important contribution to the multi-dimensional campaign against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking being waged within our Republic and in the wider Caribbean and Latin American region. We urge the Drug Control Programme to continue to pursue a comprehensive and balanced approach to this worldwide campaign, endeavouring to address equitably the problems of demand, production and trafficking.

In the field of international law, we have over the past decades seen a number of new agreements in virtually all branches of human activity. Trinidad and Tobago is encouraged by the progress made during the fiftieth session of the General Assembly towards the establishment of an international criminal court. We look forward to a positive recommendation for the completion of work during the fifty-first session of the General Assembly in order to realize the goal of a diplomatic conference in 1998 to adopt the statute and establish the court. We in the international community have the responsibility to create this global institution with the requisite global jurisdiction, and to equip it with the necessary authority to make it an effective, impartial body, with the broadest possible participation of States from all geographical regions. Meanwhile, Trinidad and Tobago fully supports the activities of the International Tribunals for the territories of the former Yugoslavia and of Rwanda.

In the field of nuclear disarmament, the international community last year indefinitely extended the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and, earlier this month, the General Assembly adopted the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. These two developments have served to promote non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The international community must now, however, focus its attention on the emerging consensus that all nuclear explosions must be banned.

A related environmental concern to which Trinidad and Tobago, the Caribbean and the Alliance of Small Island Nations attach the greatest importance is that of the continued shipments of irradiated nuclear fuel, plutonium and high-level radioactive wastes. At last year's Review Conference on the Non-Proliferation Treaty, Trinidad and Tobago and the Alliance of Small Island Nations was able, after long and intensive negotiations, to obtain agreement on specific language registering the concerns of small island developing States and other coastal States on this issue.

The considerations which led us to pursue that initiative then are still relevant now. These shipments continue to take place despite the potentially catastrophic effects on small island developing States, whose fragile and vulnerable economies are overwhelmingly dependent on their marine and coastal resources, and who possess neither the resources nor the capability to deal with possible accidents of this nature. Trinidad and Tobago would therefore like to reiterate the priority concern we attach to this issue, and to urge the shipment countries to respect the wishes of small island developing States and other en-route States, which have called for an end to these shipments through their archipelagic and territorial waters, as well as their exclusive economic zones.

The notions of shared responsibilities and collective action are the *raison d'être* of the United Nations system. As we prepare to face the new challenges of the twenty-first century, these notions assume a critical relevance. Trinidad and Tobago is convinced that the United Nations has the capacity to reconcile these opposing forces of globalization and fragmentation in the interests of us all. The United Nations also has the strength and legitimacy to transform the fears and perils of the new age into a constructive global partnership of cooperation and solidarity. Trinidad and Tobago pledges to work with others to harness this potential and to confront the challenges which face the Organization and the international community as we move towards the new millennium.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Basdeo Panday, Prime Minister of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, was escorted from the rostrum.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

One representative has requested to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg there was an erroneous reference to the situation in my country that warrants a reply.

First, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg condemned what he called the latest assault by the Iraqi Government against the Kurdish population. It seems that the Foreign Minister is not aware of, or wishes to ignore, the facts.

In order to set the record straight, what occurred in northern Iraq is that an armed group supported by a neighbouring State attempted to establish a stronghold for that State in our territory. Iraqi national Kurds resisted, and they requested the assistance of the central Government. We expelled the saboteurs and terrorists from our territory. Stability has now been restored in the northern area after more than five years of internal combat.

Can the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg explain how it is possible, from the viewpoint of international law, to condemn the movement of a State's troops inside its own territory in order to impose order and expel aggressors and terrorists?

Secondly, the Minister from Luxembourg called for

(*spoke in French*)

> "a complete withdrawal of Iraqi forces and for full respect for the territorial integrity of Iraq." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Plenary Meetings, 9th meeting, p. 14*)

(*spoke in Arabic*)

We have never heard such contradictory logic. He requested that a country's troops withdraw from its own territory and respect the territorial integrity of that same State. We leave it to the intelligence of members to realize the contradictory nature of this. If the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg is really concerned about the unity of Iraq's territory, as he claims, he would be against foreign interference in the affairs of Iraq and against the United States imposition of no-fly zones in the northern and southern parts of Iraq in a manner that contradicts international law, the Charter of the United Nations, as well as the resolutions of the Security Council.

Finally, the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg also expressed the hope that the formula of oil for food would swiftly be implemented. While we generally welcome this invitation, we would hope that it would be extended specifically to those who are delaying the implementation of the formula for election purposes, and here we mean the United States of America.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.